



U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

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DANCER SENTENCED TO 88 MONTHS FOR STABBING AT NORTHEAST WASHINGTON NIGHTSPOT

WASHINGTON – Serbennia Chase, 29, a dancer at the Skylark Lounge, recently was sentenced to 88 months of incarceration for a stabbing that took place at the nightspot, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced. The Honorable Craig Iscoe sentenced Chase on Aug. 31, 2010 in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. A jury found Chase guilty in June 2010 of one count each of aggravated assault while armed, assault with significant bodily injury and escape.

According to the evidence presented at trial, Chase had been romantically involved with the victim in the early part of 2007. The relationship was a violent one, and in May of 2007, the victim pleaded guilty to, and served time for, assaulting the defendant. In connection with that conviction, the victim was ordered to stay away from the defendant and the Skylark Lounge, which is on New York Avenue NE.

Early Sept. 8, 2008, 16 months after the stay-away order had been entered by the Court, the victim went to the Skylark Lounge, hoping that he could patronize the establishment once again. Chase, who was still dancing there, informed the management about the stay-away order and said that she wanted him to leave. Management asked him to leave the lounge, and he did. But as he was standing outside in the parking lot, Chase left the stage, armed herself with a knife, and approached him outside of the club.

Chase stabbed the victim in the neck, leaving a gash from his ear to collarbone. She then fled the scene, ditched the knife and was later found hiding behind bushes. The victim survived, but he lost more than half of the blood in his body, and underwent several transfusions and surgery.

In announcing his sentence, Judge Iscoe cited the deliberate and violent nature of the offense, the victim's life-threatening injury, and the fact that while the defendant was on

release in the aggravated assault case, she committed the other offense of escaping from a halfway house where she had been placed by the Court pending trial.

United States Attorney Machen praised the outstanding work of the trial team, which included Assistant U.S. Attorneys Lindsay Suttenger and Karen Rich; Victim Witness Program Specialist Meshall Thomas, of the Domestic Violence Unit; Paralegal Troy Griffiths; IT Specialist Josh Ellen; Legal Assistant Etta Ford, and the Litigation Services Department, which enlarged more than 50 pictures for the defendant's trial.

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